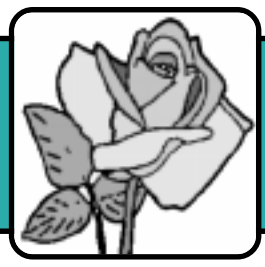


Horticulture

Purple Loosestrife Noxious Weed

Another plant will be added to the state's list of noxious weeds. Beginning January 1, 2001, county weed superintendents will enforce the control of purple loosestrife, a plant most often found in wetland areas. Governor Mike Johanns approved the new noxious weed rules and regulations on May 1.

What is purple loosestrife? Purple loosestrife is an introduced perennial weed that aggressively invades wetland habitats, destroying these valuable ecosystems and reducing the diversity of native plants. Purple loosestrife plants can grow up to 10 feet tall and produce as many as 50 stems on a single plant. The leaves are opposite, lance-shaped and are directly attached to the stiff, four-sided stems. Purple flowers are borne on tall spikes from July through September each year. One mature purple loosestrife plant may produce up to 2.5 million seeds each year.

Purple loosestrife was originally from Europe and was introduced into the U.S. and Canada in the early 1800s. It is not a native or naturally-occurring plant in any part of the U.S. and is considered an introduced or exotic species.

Horticultural cultivars of Lythrum, such as "Robert", "Morden Gleam" or "Morden Pink" are described as being cultivars of *Lythrum salicaria*, *Lythrum virgatum* L., both from Eurasia, or the native *Lythrum alatum* Pursh. Taxonomists in North America have determined *Lythrum salicaria* and *Lythrum virgatum* are the same and they hybridize freely.

There has been some confusion in the past as to whether purple loosestrife cultivars can produce seed. Neil Anderson and Peter Ascher at the University of Minnesota determined fertility levels of 18 cultivars of *Lythrum salicaria* and *Lythrum virgatum* in a 1993 study. Their results showed purple loosestrife cultivars are not sterile but are, in fact, very fertile. Although most cultivars are self-incompatible, they can produce large amounts of seed when used as a male or female parent in making crosses.

Young purple loosestrife plants can be pulled by hand, as long as the entire plant and the roots are removed completely. Mowing or hand-pulling older, larger plants or applying herbicides is more difficult, expensive, and may only be a temporary remedy to control purple loosestrife in wetland areas. Do not plant purple loosestrife in your garden. Biological control is the only long-term solution to manage purple loosestrife infestations and reduce populations of this invasive weed. The introduction of beneficial insects is part of a national purple loosestrife biological control program that began in the U.S. in 1992. (DJ)

Controlling Undesirable Perennial Grasses in the Lawn

Perennial grasses, such as quackgrass and nimblewill, are some of the most difficult weeds to control in the lawn. Control is difficult because there is no herbicide that will selectively destroy these weeds. Also, pulling or digging these perennial grasses is often unsuccessful.

Quackgrass is a cool-season perennial grass. It spreads rapidly by underground stems or rhizomes. Its leaf blades are bright green, coarse in texture, and twice the width of leaves of bluegrass. Quackgrass is objectionable in lawns because of its coarse texture and spreading habit. Quackgrass also can be a major problem in flower and vegetable gardens.

Nimblewill is a warm-season perennial grass. Nimblewill is a thin, wiry grass that is pale green or gray-green. It spreads by aboveground shoots or stolons, often forming circular spots in the lawn. Nimblewill is easy to spot in the lawn because it greens up late in the spring and turns brown in early fall. Nimblewill is objectionable in the lawn because of its gray-green color and delayed green-up in the spring and early browning in fall.

The best way to control quackgrass, nimblewill, and other undesirable perennial grasses in the lawn is to spot treat the weed-infested areas with glyphosate (Roundup, Kleenup, etc.). Glyphosate is a systemic, nonselective herbicide that is absorbed through the foliage and translocated to all parts of the plant. Visible symptoms, yellowing or browning of foliage, usually develop in 7 to 10 days of the application. Death typically occurs in two to four weeks. Glyphosate is most effective when applied to actively growing plants.

Mid-summer is an excellent time to control undesirable perennial grasses in the lawn. Most perennial grasses, such as nimblewill, are actively growing in the summer. Also, mid-summer control efforts allow adequate time to kill the weedy grasses and to prepare the areas for seeding or sodding in late summer. Complete destruction of the weeds is necessary to prevent their reappearance.

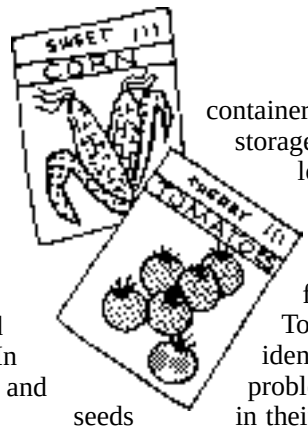
See **GRASSES** *on page 11*

Storing Extra Seeds

Seeds can survive several years when given the proper environment. Although optimum storage life varies among species, most seeds will survive at least two years with some lasting for centuries. Whether they are leftovers from the seed you purchased or seeds you have gathered from your own plants, with a little care and thought, it is a simple task to save seeds for use in next years' garden. Unused seeds that keep for at least five years are broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, kohlrabi, lettuce, pumpkin, radish, and squash.

The most important storage factor is low moisture content. Most seeds readily absorb water if stored in a damp environment. In a proper planting environment, this would lead to germination and growth. In storage this leads to molding and rot. Store seeds at a relative humidity of less than 65 percent.

Seed life can be further extended by placing seeds in a sealed container. This reduces the oxygen content and creates a controlled atmosphere. The best



containers for seed storage are zip lock plastic bags or glass jars with tight-fitting lids. To avoid identification problems, leave seeds in their original packets or envelopes. Containers may be kept in a refrigerator or in any cool, dark, dry place. (MJM)

Horticulture information center

NUFACTS
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
1-800-832-5441; or
441-7188 in the Lincoln area

To listen to a NUFACTS information center message, call the number above on a touch-tone phone, then enter a three-digit number listed below. Call 441-7180 to receive a brochure with all the NUFACTS message topics. (MJM)

NUFACTS
127 Tree Watering
134 Yellowing and Dropping Leaves
138 Tree stump removal
140 Mite Injury
164 Drying flowers
180 Summer Patch of Turf
183 Poison Ivy Control
195 Turf Watering
198 Mushrooms in lawn
200 Broadleaf Weed Control
241 Fruit storage
267 Water Management
290 Weed Control in Garden
292 Rabbit Control in Garden
187 White Grubs in Turf

2000 August/September Garden Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	2 Apply grub control	3 Pull weeds	4 Keep garden watered	5
6	7	8 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	9 Cut herbs to dry	10 Control bean leaf beetle	11	12
13	14	15 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	16 Pick flowers to dry or press	17 Stop fertilizing roses	18 Overseed tall fescue	19
20	21 Control yellow nut sedge	22 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	23	24 Divide peonies	25	26
27	28	29 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	30 Evaluate garden plants	31 Update garden journal	1	2
3	4	5	6 Power rake or aerify bluegrass lawn	7	8 Overseed Bluegrass	9
10	11 Control perennial broadleaf weeds	12	13	14	15	16 Festival of Color, Mead
17	18	19 Divide lily-of-the-valley	20 Save annual flower seeds, like marigolds and zinnias	21	22 Check outdoor houseplants for insects	23
24	25 Bring outdoor houseplants inside before frost	26	27 Dig tender bubls, tubers and corms before frost	28	29	30

Many of us need reminders. That is the purpose of this calendar. Check the calendar each month and follow the recommendations if they are necessary in your landscape situation. (MJM)